

REMARKS

Claims 1, 8, 15, 21, 22 and 31 have been amended. Claims 1-4, 5-11 and 13-35 are pending.

In view of the above amendments and the following remarks, the Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of each of the rejections and allowance of the application.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. 112

Claims 22-29, 31 and 32 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph.

Claim 22 has been amended to depend from claim 21. This error is of a typographical nature. No new matter has been added. Amended claim 22 is dependent from a preceding claim and is definite. Claims 23-29 are dependent from claim 22 and are now definite for at least the same reason.

Applicants request withdrawal of the 35 U.S.C. 112 rejection of claims 22-29.

Claim 31 has been amended to depend from claim 30. This error is of a typographical nature. No new matter has been added. The limitation "the curing process of said epoxy" in amended claim 31 has antecedent basis in claim 30. Claim 31 is now definite. Claim 32 is dependent from claim 31 and the limitation "throughout said curing process" now has antecedent basis in claim 30. Claim 32 also is now definite.

Applicants request withdrawal of the 35 U.S.C. 112 rejection of claims 31 and 32.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. 102

Claims 1, 8 and 15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Pat. No. 5,881,185 to Feth et al. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Claims 1, 8 and 15 have been amended to recite that the fibers are disposed "beside one another" in the grouping. This limitation clarifies the relationship of the fibers one to another. Thus, the fibers in the grouping of the present application are laid adjacent each other, side-by-side. *See, for example*, page 8, lines 14-18 and Figs. 4 and 5. No new matter has been added.

In contrast, the Feth patent discloses a fiber (30) that is cleaved into two pieces: a first fiber segment (32) and a second fiber segment (36). Second end (34) of the first fiber segment

(32) and the second end (37) of the second fiber second (36) are aligned and fused together end-to-end by fusion splicer (63) creating a splice alignment. See col. 5, line 62 to col. 6, line 9.

Thus, Feth does not disclose each and every limitation recited in claims 1, 8 and 15 of the present application. In particular, Feth discloses fiber segments that are aligned end-to-end, whereas the fibers of the present application are disposed side-by-side. Applicants respectfully request the withdrawal of the 35 U.S.C. 102 rejection and allowance of claims 1, 8 and 15.

Claims 1, 8, 15 and 21 have also been amended to correct a typographical omission of the word "of" in two places in each claim. Applicants respectfully request the allowance of claims 1, 8, 15 and 21.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. 103

Claims 4, 6, 7, 11, 13, 14 and 18-20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being anticipated by U.S. Pat. No. 5,881,185 to Feth et al. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Claims 4, 6, 7, 11, 13, 14 and 18-20 depend from either independent claim 1, 8 or 15. In view of the above amendments to claims 1, 8 and 15 and associated remarks, these dependent claims should be allowable for at least the same reasons.

Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. 103 and allowance of dependent claims 4, 6, 7, 11, 13, 14 and 18-20.

Drawings

Figure 5 has been amended to remove the 410 callout. The spurious 410 callout was included by oversight and is not referenced in the description of Figure 5.

A complete set of drawings, including a revised Fig. 5, is included herewith

Comments on Allowable Subject Matter

The Examiner's allowance of claim 21 is appreciated. The Applicants submit the following comments concerning the Examiner's statement of reasons for the indication of allowable subject matter in paragraph 16 on page 6 of the office action. It is the subject matter of each claim as a whole that is patentable, not any particular feature recited in the claim(s). The

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Filed : July 17, 2000
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Applicants do not concede that the reasons for allowable subject matter given by the Examiner are the only reasons that make, or would make, the claims allowable and do not make any admission or concession concerning the Examiner's statement on pages 6 and 7 of the office action.

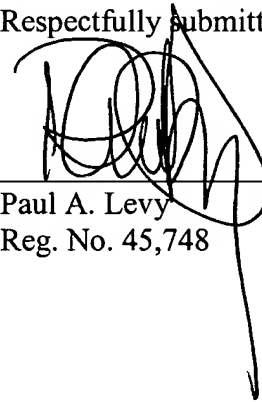
Conclusion

Applicants ask that all claims be allowed. Enclosed is a \$110 check for the Petition for Extension of Time fee. Please apply any other charges or credits to Deposit Account No. 06-1050.

Date: _____

2/26/03

Respectfully submitted,



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